

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 5        1.        A dental bridge comprising:
  - a first member extending along an axis and connectable to at least one tooth; and
  - a second member separate from the first member, the second member being connectable to the first member in an orientation in which the second member has a longitudinal portion which extends parallel to the axis.
- 10        2.        The dental bridge of Claim 1, wherein the first member includes a ladder structure, the ladder structure including opposing rails connected by a plurality of rungs, adjacent ones of the plurality of rungs defining an opening therebetween.
- 15        3.        The dental bridge of Claim 2, wherein at least one of the rails includes a rail wall, the rail wall defining wall openings therethrough.
- 20        4.        The dental bridge of Claim 3, wherein each of the rails includes a rail wall, each rail wall defining wall openings therethrough.
- 25        5.        The dental bridge of Claim 3, wherein each of the wall openings communicate with at least an associated opening.
- 30        6.        The dental bridge of Claim 1, wherein the second member includes a truss member.
- 35        7.        The dental bridge of Claim 6, wherein the truss member includes a first truss member providing the longitudinal portion and a second truss member depending from the first truss member, the second truss member extending in a plane parallel to the axis.
- 40        8.        The dental bridge of Claim 7, wherein the second truss member is integrally connected to the first truss member.

9. The dental bridge of Claim 7, wherein the truss member includes a third truss member depending from the first truss member, the third truss member extending in a plane transverse to the axis and transverse to the plane of the second truss member.

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10. The dental bridge of Claim 9, wherein the third truss member is separate from and connectable to at least one of the first truss member and the second truss member.

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11. The dental bridge of Claim 1, wherein the first member includes a ladder structure, the ladder structure including opposing rails connected by a plurality of rungs, adjacent ones of the plurality of rungs defining an opening therebetween, and wherein the second member includes a plurality of projections, each of the plurality of projections being engageable in an associated opening.

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12. The dental bridge of Claim 11, wherein the first member has an upper surface, and wherein at least one of the plurality of projections extends above the upper surface of the first member.

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13. The dental bridge of Claim 12, wherein each of the plurality of projections extends above the upper surface of the first member.

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14. The dental bridge of Claim 11, wherein the second member includes a truss member, the truss member including a first truss member providing the longitudinal portion and supporting the plurality of projections, the truss member further including a second truss member depending from the first truss member, the second truss member extending in a plane parallel to the axis.

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15. The dental bridge of Claim 1, wherein the first member has a first end and a second end spaced along the axis, and wherein the dental bridge further comprises:

a third member separate from and connectable to one of the first end and the second end of the first member; and

a connecting assembly operable to connect the third member to the first member.

16. The dental bridge of Claim 15, wherein the third member includes a wire attachment for anterior teeth.

5 17. The dental bridge of Claim 15, wherein the third member includes a perforated band attachment for anterior teeth.

10 18. The dental bridge of Claim 15, wherein the connecting assembly includes a first connecting portion provided by the first member and a second connecting portion provided by the third member.

15 19. The dental bridge of Claim 18, wherein the first member includes a ladder structure, the ladder structure including opposing rails connected by a plurality of rungs, wherein the first connecting portion includes at least one of the plurality of rungs.

20 20. The dental bridge of Claim 19, wherein the second connecting portion defines a first recess for receiving one of the plurality of rungs, the first recess extending in a direction transverse to the axis, the second connecting portion defining a second recess for receiving another of the plurality of rungs, the second recess extending in a direction along the axis.

25 21. The dental bridge of Claim 1, further comprising a support member connectable to at least one of the first member and the second member, the support member being engageable with an outer surface of a tooth.

22. The dental bridge of Claim 21, wherein the support member includes lingual finger reinforcement.

23. A dental bridge comprising:

a ladder structure extending along an axis and connectable to at least one tooth, the ladder structure including opposing rails connected by a plurality of rungs, adjacent ones of the plurality of rungs defining an opening therebetween; and

5 a truss member separate and connectable to the ladder structure, the truss member including a first truss member extending parallel to the axis and a second truss member depending from the first truss member, the second truss member extending in a plane parallel to the axis.

10 24. The dental bridge of Claim 23, wherein each of the rails includes a rail wall, each rail wall defining wall openings therethrough.

25. The dental bridge of Claim 24, wherein each of the wall openings communicate with at least an associated opening.

15 26. The dental bridge of Claim 23, wherein the second truss member is integrally connected to the first truss member.

27. The dental bridge of Claim 23, wherein the truss member includes a third 20 truss member depending from the first truss member, the third truss member extending in a plane transverse to the axis and transverse to the plane of the second truss member.

28. The dental bridge of Claim 27, wherein the third truss member is separate 25 from and connectable to at least one of the first truss member and the second truss member.

29. The dental bridge of Claim 23, wherein the truss member includes a plurality of projections, each of the plurality of projections being engageable in an opening.

30. The dental bridge of Claim 29, wherein the ladder structure has an upper surface, and wherein at least one of the plurality of projections extends above the upper surface of the ladder structure.

31. The dental bridge of Claim 30, wherein each of the plurality of projections extends above the upper surface of the ladder structure.

32. The dental bridge of Claim 29, wherein the first truss member supports the 5 plurality of projections.

33. The dental bridge of Claim 23, wherein the ladder structure has a first end and a second end spaced along the axis, and wherein the dental bridge further comprises:

10 the second end of the ladder structure; and  
a third member separate from and connectable to one of the first end and  
a connecting assembly operable to connect the third member to the ladder  
structure.

34. The dental bridge of Claim 33, wherein the third member includes a wire 15 attachment for anterior teeth.

35. The dental bridge of Claim 33, wherein the third member includes a perforated band attachment for anterior teeth.

20 36. The dental bridge of Claim 33, wherein the connecting assembly includes a first connecting portion provided by the ladder structure and a second connecting portion provided by the third member.

25 37. The dental bridge of Claim 36, wherein the first connecting portion includes at least one of the plurality of rungs.

38. The dental bridge of Claim 37, wherein the second connecting portion defines a first recess for receiving one of the plurality of rungs, the first recess extending in a direction transverse to the axis, the second connecting portion defining a second recess 30 for receiving another of the plurality of rungs, the second recess extending in a direction along the axis.

39. The dental bridge of Claim 23, further comprising a support member connectable to at least one of the ladder structure and the truss member, the support member being engageable with an outer surface of a tooth.

5 40. The dental bridge of Claim 39, wherein the support member includes lingual finger reinforcement.

41. A method of assembling a dental bridge, the dental bridge including a ladder structure extending along an axis and connectable to at least one tooth, the ladder 10 structure including opposing rails connected by a plurality of rungs, adjacent ones of the plurality of rungs defining an opening therebetween, the dental bridge also including a truss member separate and connectable to the ladder structure, the truss member including a first truss member extending parallel to the axis and a second truss member depending from the first truss member, the second truss member extending in a plane parallel to the 15 axis, the method comprising the acts of:

supporting a pontic on the truss member;  
connecting the ladder structure and the truss member;  
forming a groove in a tooth;  
applying a bonding resin;  
20 placing composite in the groove; and  
supporting at least a portion of the ladder structure in the composite in the groove.